

## **Sullivan County NH**

**Type of Meeting:**

**Sullivan County Full Delegation**

**Date / Time:**

**14 August 2008 / 4:00 pm**

**Place:**

**Newport County Complex**

**Participants:**

Representatives: Peter Franklin (Chair), Ellen Nielsen (Clerk), John Cloutier, Larry Converse, Tom Donovan, Brenda Ferland, Ray Gagnon, Sue Gottling, Matthew Houde, Arthur Jillette, Jay Phinizy, Beverly Rodeschin and Carla Skinder

Commissioners: Ethel Jarvis

Other Elected Officials: County Attorney Marc Hathaway

County Employees: Greg Chanis, Ted Purdy, Ross Cunningham, Charles Brookens, Tammy McLaughlin, Dan Gokey, John Gramuglia, John Milliken and Doug Robard

Public Participants: Ronald White and Robert A. Grenier

Public Observers: Rose Vinci, Chris Vinci, Jeffrey Goff, Ernie Bridge, Beverley Bridge, Bethany Lowe and Spec Bowers

Press: Heather Murdock, *Valley News* and Ben Bulkeley, *Eagle-Times*

The meeting was called to order by Rep. Franklin at 4:02 pm. This meeting was a continuation of the recessed county convention of 30 June, 2008, and the purpose of the meeting was to vote on whether or not to approve bonding for the proposed community corrections transitional housing unit and treatment program.

**Approval of Minutes:**

Copies of the draft minutes of the public hearing on the corrections project on 31 July 2008 and the delegation meeting of 6 August 2008 were provided for the delegation to review.

**Rep Gottling moved that the minutes of 31 July be approved and Rep. Skinder seconded the motion, which was approved by a unanimous voice vote, with Rep. Rodeschin, Rep. Ferland and Rep. Cloutier abstaining.**

**Rep Gottling moved that the minutes of 6 August be approved and Rep. Skinder seconded the motion, which was approved by a unanimous voice vote. Rep. Ferland and Rep. Gagnon abstained.**

**Public Participation:**

Ronald White, Superintendent of Corrections in Merrimac County, and Robert Grenier, Superintendant of Corrections in Belknap County had been invited to speak to the delegation about the proposed corrections project. They spoke briefly about the overcrowding in their systems which has prevented them from offering treatment options—all of their space is being used for beds. They said that a project such as the one proposed in Sullivan County offers hope for a new approach to corrections which will reduce recidivism and reduce the jail population.

After the two superintendents spoke, Rep. Franklin began to explain how the financing for the proposal would work. He suggested that the county apply for a bond anticipation note (BAN), which would allow the county to begin the project before issuing the bonds to finance it. Rep.

Donovan asked how this method of financing would affect the timeline for the project. As Rep. Franklin began to answer Rep. Donovan's question, Jeff Goff, who is a Claremont City Councilman, rose and asked if there would be a time for public input. Rep. Franklin said that Mr. Goff had not been recognized to speak. Mr. Goff continued to speak. Rep. Franklin ruled that Mr. Goff was out of order and could not speak. Mr. Goff said that he represented the people of Claremont, who could not come to a meeting held at 4:00 in the afternoon, and he should be allowed to speak. Rep. Gagnon said that the delegation had held a public hearing on 31 July, and had allowed two weeks for public comment, and now it was time to vote. Rep. Nielsen pointed out that Mr. Goff had not attended the public hearing. Mr. Goff asked that a member of the delegation challenge the ruling of the chair that he could not speak.

**Rep. Rodeschin moved to challenge the ruling of the chair on the basis that two individuals not from Sullivan County were recognized to speak. Rep. Nielsen seconded the motion. Rep. Franklin requested that Rep. Rodeschin's original motion be re-framed as "Shall the delegation uphold the ruling of the chair that Mr. Goff is not recognized to speak?" The motion to uphold the ruling of the chair passed by a roll call vote of 10-3, with representatives voting as follows: YES Cloutier, Converse, Donovan, Franklin, Gottling, Houde, Jillette, Nielsen, Phinizy and Skinder NO Ferland, Gagnon and Rodeschin**

**Rep. Phinizy moved that the delegation allow for a time of public comment after the discussion [by the delegation] and before the vote. This motion was seconded by Rep. Cloutier. The motion passed 12-1, with representatives voting as follows: YES Cloutier, Donovan, Franklin, Gagnon, Gottling, Houde, Jillette, Nielsen, Phinizy, Rodeschin and Skinder NO Converse.**

Mr. Goff left after this motion passed.

Discussion about the plan to finance the proposed corrections project continued. Rep. Franklin urged that the \$209,000 appropriation for upgrades to the jail, which was included in the fiscal 09 budget, be transferred to the contra line so that the deficit could be further reduced. Rep. Ferland objected, and said that she thought that since this expenditure had been approved, it should stay in the budget. Several representatives asked if it would be possible to change the budget, since it had been voted on already. Mr. Franklin said that the vote on the budget could be reconsidered, but not at this meeting. It was pointed out that the MS 42 must be sent to the DRA by August 31.

**Rep. Ferland moved that the appropriation for \$209,000, to be used for Department of corrections capital improvements should remain in the current fiscal 09 budget, and be deducted from the amount of the bond issue, with no part of the appropriation to be used for deficit reduction.. This motion was seconded by Rep. Skinder and passed 7-6, with representatives voting as follows: YES Cloutier, Donovan, Ferland, Nielsen, Phinizy, Skinder and Rodeschin NO Converse, Franklin, Gagnon, Gottling, Houde and Jillette.**

Since the capital improvement in the Fiscal 09 budget were to have been part of the larger project, the amount which would need to be financed by a bond issue was decreased from 7.1 million dollars to 6.9 million dollars.

**Rep. Phinizy moved to authorize the Sullivan County Board of Commissioners to issue bonds or notes for the purposes of upgrading the existing Sullivan County correctional facility and to construct a new 68 bed community corrections center. The amount of said bonds or notes shall not exceed \$6,900,000. The authorization given to the Sullivan County board of commissioners in this motion shall be subject to all applicable provisions of RSA Chapter 33. In addition, the initial payment on any bond or note issued pursuant to this authorization shall occur no earlier than July 1, 2010. The motion was seconded by Rep. Skinder.**

Several representatives spoke in favor of the proposal. Rep. Rodeschin said she agreed that the county needed a solution to the problems of overcrowding and recidivism at the jail but that she would vote against the project because of concerns about the budget. The chair was reminded that the delegation had voted to allow time for public comment before a vote on the bonding of the project was taken. Commissioner Jarvis commented that in her opinion, the delegation meetings were being run democratically. Rep. Cloutier asked if he could ask Mr. Cunningham some questions about whether or not inmates from other counties would be at the treatment program. Mr. Cunningham said that he would not consider accepting out of county inmates until the program was well-established. When it became clear that no one wanted to make more comments, Rep. Rodeschin and Rep. Phinizy called the question. The chair read the motion again.

**The motion for financing the community corrections center and the jail upgrades passed 12-1 with representatives voting as follows: YES Cloutier, Converse, Donovan, Franklin, Gagnon, Gottling, Houde, Jillette, Nielsen, Phinizy and Skinder NO Rodeschin.**

**The chair asked if there were any further business, and hearing none, declared the meeting adjourned at about 5:30 pm.**

Respectfully submitted,

  
Rep. Ellen Nielsen, Delegation Clerk